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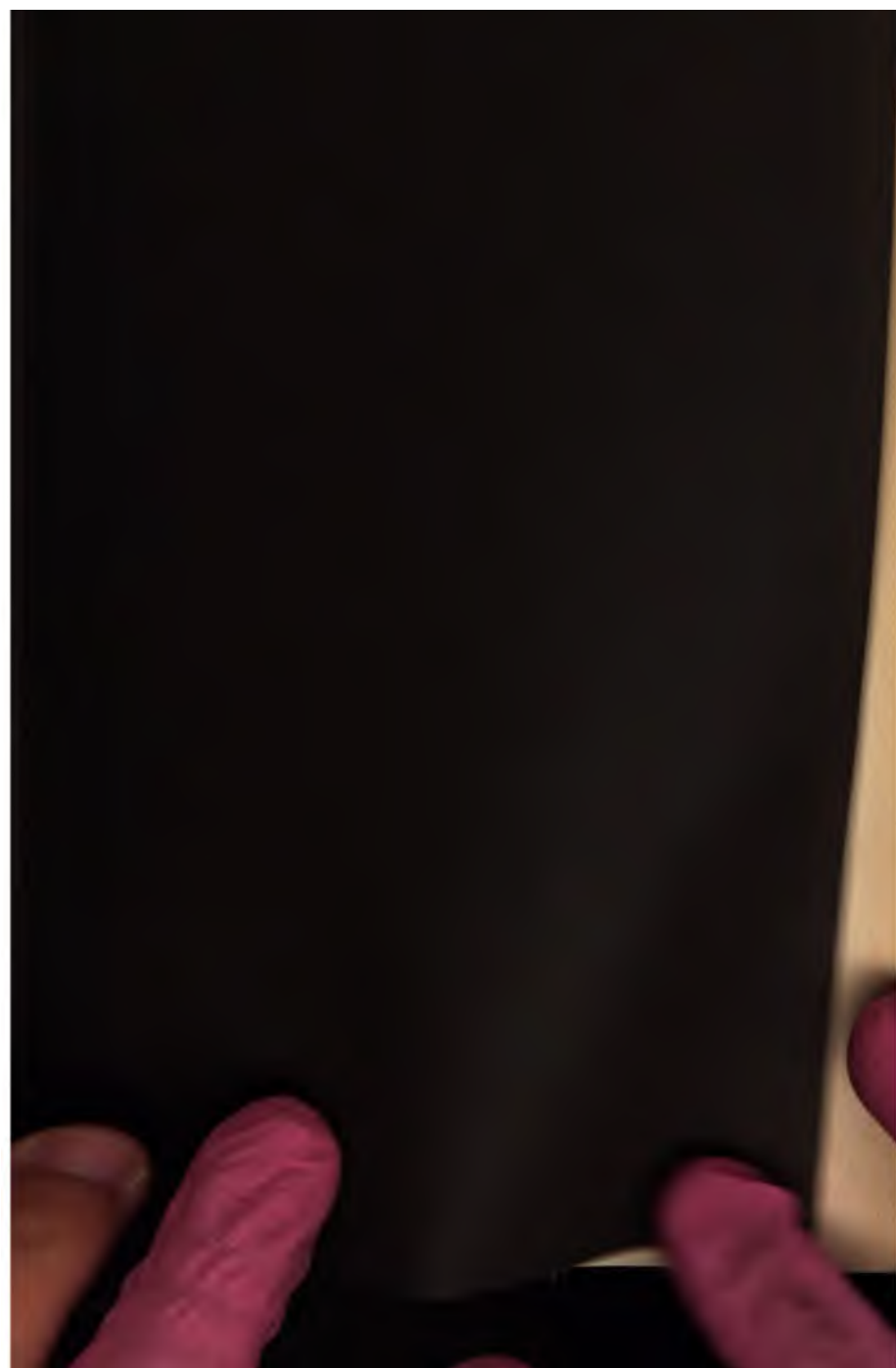
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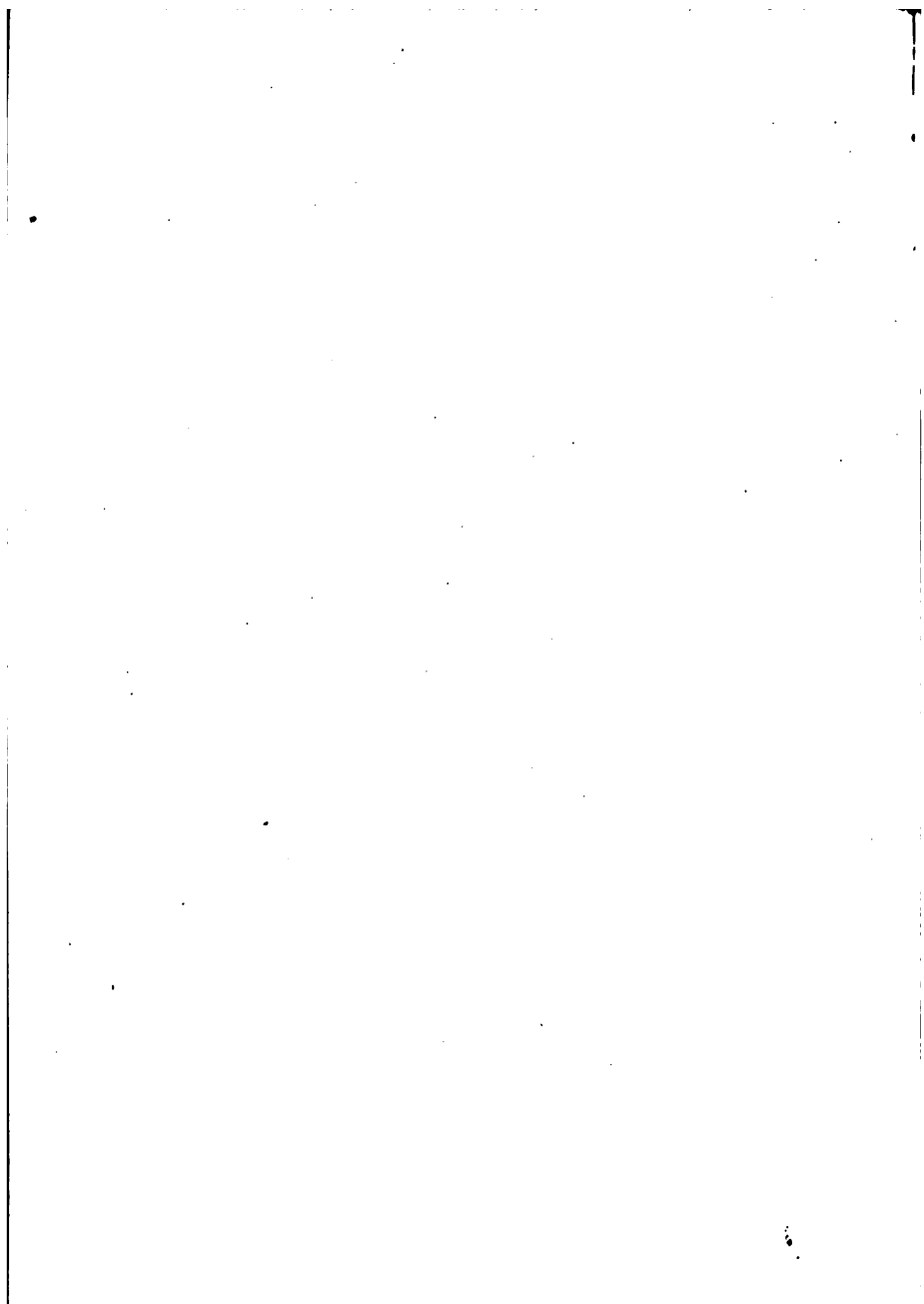
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H E A L E Y :

A Tale.

BY

JESSIE FOTHERGILL,

AUTHOR OF

'THE FIRST VIOLIN,' 'PROBATION,' ETC.



LONDON:

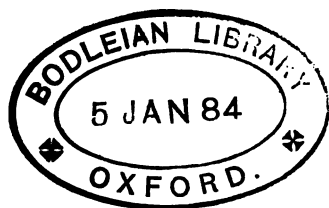
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

1884.

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PREFACE.

THE work, of which the present volume is a re-issue, was first published in 1875, under the title of 'Healey : a Romance.' Though I am fully aware of its many defects, and of certain radical deficiencies of construction which no revision can alter or improve away, yet I venture to think that it presents a picture of certain phases of Lancashire life, operative and other, painted at a time when I lived amidst them and knew them intimately, which picture is rendered with a certain fidelity that may make it interesting to those who, like myself, belong to this race, and love it, as being part and parcel of it, and knowing its virtues as well as its defects. Such will recognise the kind of men and women they have known, and

perhaps know now, when they encounter them again in these pages, and will pardon the imperfect handling of materials and situations, the meanings and bearings of which, when this tale was written, I could better feel than express.

To those who know neither the land nor the people of which I write, I would say: If you are interested, read on—if not, lay the blame of your disappointment on the writer rather than on the puppets which she has not known how to work smoothly enough for your gratification.

JESSIE FOTHERGILL.

DARLINGTON,

September 15, 1883.

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HEALEY :

A TALE.



PROLOGUE.

‘SOME people live who know misery only by comparison with their own happiness ; so entirely have they lived in light, that they cannot comprehend shade, pure and simple. They have never found their path suddenly swerve aside from the pleasant south, to go on under bleak, grey, easterly rocks, or along a sunless northern shore. They have walked in warmth and light all their lives ; and if, here and there, few and far between, transient clouds have thinly veiled their sun, they have no doubt made much ado—have called out loudly that they were in great and unheard-of trouble, and their companions along their radiant, flower-set path have

the familiar street, or they may be pausing, their eyes resting upon those never-forgotten hill outlines. It is too much ; the pain is too keen. The thinker moves with restless trouble, clasping trembling hands, and murmurs :

‘ Oh, it is madness to dwell upon all that ! I never will again.’

It is a firmly meant resolve, kept as faithfully as most others of its kind—that is, not at all.

CHAPTER I.

MR. CRIER'S PETITION.

'IF you please, ma'am, Mr. Crier's respects, and would you favour him with a few words?'

'Crier? Yes; you can bring him in here.'

The servant retired, and Katharine Healey was left to await her return with Mr. Crier.

It is said that there are women who are handsome in repose, others who are handsome when animated or excited. Peace be with them! Katharine Healey belonged to neither order; one glance was sufficient to assure anyone that she was handsome at no time and in no mood. She never, to the end of her life, had many admirers, and even those she had never praised her beauty. At that moment not even the grace of an amiable expression was present to redeem her plainness of feature. Upon her face was stamped, in characters which he might read who ran, the look of an unhappy woman. From whatever cause the